



Coleridge Complaints Procedure

March 2021

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Introduction

This complaints procedure is produced in conjunction with the DfE's 'Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020'.

Who can make a complaint?

This complaints procedure is not limited to parents or carers of children that are registered at the school. Any person, including members of the public, may make a complaint to Coleridge Primary School about any provision of facilities or services that we provide. Unless complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures (such as appeals relating to exclusions or admissions), we will use this complaints procedure.

The difference between a concern and a complaint

A concern may be defined as '*an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought*'.

A complaint may be defined as '*an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action*'.

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. Coleridge Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

If you have difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff, we will respect your views. In these cases, The Headteacher, will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the Headteacher will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

We understand however, that there are occasions when people would like to raise their concerns formally. In this case, Coleridge Primary School will attempt to resolve the issue internally, through the stages outlined within this Complaints Procedure.

Scope of this Complaints Procedure and Alternative Statutory Procedures

This procedure covers all complaints about any provision of community facilities or services by Coleridge Primary School. Not all areas of complaint however are appropriate for schools to resolve themselves. For the following, listed in the table below, there are statutory procedures to be followed. Appendix F lists the appropriate local contact.

Exceptions	Whom to contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions to schools• Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs• School re-organisation proposals	Concerns about admissions, statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs, or school re-organisation proposals should be raised with Haringey

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation 	<p>Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance.</p> <p>If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of children from school* 	<p>Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions/exclusions.</p> <p><i>*complaints about the application of the behaviour policy https://coleridgeprimary.net/about-us/policies/behaviour/ can be made through the school's complaints procedure.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing 	<p>We have an internal whistleblowing procedure for all our employees, including temporary staff and contractors.</p> <p>The Secretary of State for Education is the prescribed person for matters relating to education for whistleblowers in education who do not want to raise matters direct with their employer. Referrals can be made at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus.</p> <p>Volunteer staff who have concerns about our school should complain through the school's complaints procedure. You may also be able to complain direct to the LA or the Department for Education (see link above), depending on the substance of your complaint.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff grievances 	<p>Complaints from staff will be dealt with under the school's internal grievance procedures.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff conduct 	<p>Complaints about staff will be dealt with under the school's internal disciplinary procedures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Complainants will not be informed of any disciplinary action taken against a staff member as a result of a complaint. However, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints about services provided by other providers who may use school premises or facilities 	<p>Providers should have their own complaints procedure to deal with complaints about service. Please contact them direct.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Curriculum - content 	<p>Please contact the Department for Education at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus</p>

If other bodies are investigating aspects of the complaint, for example the police, local authority (LA) safeguarding teams or Tribunals, this may impact on our ability to adhere to the timescales within this procedure or result in the procedure being suspended until those public bodies have completed their investigations.

If a complainant commences legal action against Coleridge Primary School in relation to a complaint, we will consider whether to suspend the complaints procedure in relation to the complaint until those legal proceedings have concluded.

How to Raise a Concern or Complaint

A concern or complaint can be made in person, by email, in writing or by telephone. They may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as the third party has appropriate consent to do so.

Informal Stage: Resolution by Class Teacher, Staff Member or Headteacher

Concerns should be raised with either the class teacher or other appropriate member of staff including the headteacher. This school will always attempt to resolve any issues efficiently through discussion with the complainant and staff, preferably without invoking the formal procedures. At this stage it is important that concerns are dealt with informally.

Where the concern is about teaching, pupil behaviour or other issues in the classroom, the complainant should be directed to the class teacher who should try to resolve the issues. The class teacher should discuss the complainant's desired outcome with the complainant. This often helps to defuse anger and frustration and will ensure the complaints system is more effective for both parties who can then work towards achieving the desired outcome.

If the concern or complaint is about a member of staff, the complainant has the option of raising this directly with the member of staff. It is understandable that in certain situations the complainant may feel the issues are too sensitive or may feel compromised in raising them directly with the member of staff. In these instances, a meeting can be arranged through the school office with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

If the issue remains unresolved, the next step is to make a formal complaint.

The person who has been dealing with the concern/complaint up until this point, should make a clear note of the complainant's contact details and refer these to the Headteacher, together with full details of the complaint including any action that has been taken. This provides a record about the nature of the concerns and the school's attempts to resolve them informally.

Formal Stages - Overview

Resolving complaints

At each stage in the procedure, Coleridge Primary School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint
- an apology.

Complaint stages

- Informal stage: Complaint heard by staff member
- Stage 1: Complaint investigated by Head teacher
- Stage 2: Complaint considered by Chair of Governing Body
- Stage 3: Complaint heard by Governing Body complaints panel
- Stage 4: DfE Secretary of State

Governors' role

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 3 of the procedure.

Time scales

You must raise the complaint within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

Complaints received outside of term time

We will consider complaints made outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Time frames for investigations

We aim to consider and resolve complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible, whilst remaining realistic and allowing a thorough investigation at each stage. The proposed time limits for each stage of the procedure are detailed below:

- Stage 1: 15 school term days
- Stage 2: 20 school term days

Stage 3: 25 school term days

In certain cases, there may be a need for some flexibility within the procedure: for example, the possibility of further mediation between the complainant and a member of staff directly involved in the complaint. Where the issues or the circumstances warrant further or more detailed investigations the time limits above can be extended. The new deadline and an explanation for the delay will be communicated to the complainant in writing with a revised response time.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw the complaint, we will ask the complainant to confirm this in writing.

Recording Complaints

The school will keep notes of meetings and phone calls relating to the complaint. Any written responses will be added to the record. Assistance will be provided to any person who may have difficulties recording a complaint in writing. Where assistance is required a meeting can be arranged to discuss the complaint and details of the agreed complaint will be sent to the complainant for approval and information. Where required translation and interpreting services can be utilised.

Complaints by Children

Careful consideration is necessary when the complainant is a child. The school will ensure any investigations or proceedings are carried out with the child or young person in mind. Should a meeting need to be held, the setting will be kept as informal as possible to avoid the child feeling intimidated.

The involvement of a parent, teacher or mentor who could act as an advocate and provide support to the child or young person will be considered. However, the views and wishes of the child are central to the way in which the complaints are handled. Where appropriate, details of advocacy services can be provided should they wish to be represented and supported.

Consideration will be given to the level of understanding of the child. The investigator or panel (at Stage 3) needs to be aware of the views of the child and give them equal consideration to those of adults, whilst ensuring information is communicated to the child or young person in a non-threatening and easy to understand format.

Serial or Persistent Complainants

The school will always do its best to be helpful to people who contact them with a complaint or concern or a request for information and it is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. Nonetheless, we know that sometimes what the school says can be hard to accept and the complainant may remain dissatisfied. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and we will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with the school but complaints will be dealt with strictly in accordance with this Complaints Policy.

If a complainant is behaving unreasonably or unacceptably then the school shall follow the Department for Education guidance for managing serial and unreasonable complaints, set out in Appendix C.

Stage 1 – Complaint heard by Headteacher

How to Raise a Formal Complaint

Complaints against **school staff or other matters** (except the headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher, Leon Choueke ideally via email to head@coleridgeprimary.net. A complaint may also be made in writing via the school office, over the telephone or in person. Please mark any communication as Private and Confidential.

For ease of use, a template complaint form is included (see Appendix B) at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like Citizens Advice to help you.

In accordance with equality law, we will make reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

When the complaint goes straight to Stage 2 or Stage 3

Complaints that involve or are about the **headteacher or an individual governor** (other than the Chair) will be investigated at Stage 2 and should be addressed to Lorraine Gerrard (the Chair of Governors), chair@coleridgeprimary.net or in writing via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. A complaint can also be made over the telephone or in person. Where this is the case, the school office will be able to arrange this.

Complaints about the **Chair of Governors or the whole Governing Body** should be addressed to Helen Holloway, the Clerk to the Governing Body and emailed directly to her at Helen.Holloway@haringeyeducationpartnership.co.uk. If the complainant has no access to email, the complaint can be put in writing and handed in to the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. Complaints about the Chair of the Governing Body will be dealt with at stage 3 of the complaints procedure.

Acknowledging the Complaint

The headteacher will record the date the complaint is received and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **3 school days**.

Within this response, the headteacher will seek to clarify the nature of the complaint, ask what remains unresolved and what outcome the complainant would like to see. The headteacher can consider whether a face to face meeting is the most appropriate way of doing this.

Depending on the nature of the complaint the Headteacher may want to suggest a mediation procedure.

The Investigation

The headteacher may delegate the investigation to another member of the school's senior leadership team but not the decision to be taken.

During the investigation, the headteacher (or investigator) will:

- if necessary, interview those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them

to be accompanied if they wish

- keep a written record of any meetings/interviews in relation to their investigation.

Outcome

At the conclusion of the investigation, the headteacher will provide a formal written response within **15 school days** of the date of receipt of the complaint containing:

- A full explanation of the decision and the reasons for it
- Where appropriate what action the school will take to attempt to resolve the complaint
- Advice that if the complainant remains unhappy s/he should write to the Chair of the Governing Body and that this should be done within **twenty school days** of receipt of the response letter.

Complaints concerning the Governing Body

If the complaint is:

- Jointly about the Chair and Vice- Chair or
- The entire governing body or
- The majority of the governing body

Stage 1 can be considered by an independent investigator appointed by the governing body. At the conclusion of the investigation, the independent investigator will provide a formal written response. Also, if the complaint is against the whole governing body the school can consider arranging for an independent committee from another school to hear the complaint.

Stage 2 - Investigation by the Chair of Governors

If the complaint has been investigated by the Headteacher and the complainant remains dissatisfied, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Governing Body to investigate the complaint at Stage 2 of the process.

As stated above, a complaint should also be investigated at this stage if the complaint concerns the actions of the Headteacher, or of a governor (other than the Chair of the Governing Body).

When the Chair of the Governing Body receives a complaint s/he should ensure the complaint is either reinvestigated or referred to be heard by a panel of the Governing Body at Stage 3.

It is important that this reinvestigation process is independent and impartial. Therefore, the Chair of the Governing Body reinvestigating a complaint must be impartial and must not have had any previous involvement since this could result in a conflict of interest.

The Chair of the Governing Body may also seek the advice of external bodies such as the local authority Governor Services team or the School Improvement Adviser.

The Chair of the Governing Body may arrange for the complaint to be investigated on his/her behalf by another governor, or by another person who is neither a school governor nor a member of staff at the school.

At this point the complainant may be dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled at Stage 1 as well as pursuing the initial complaint. In that event, this dissatisfaction as well as the initial complaint will either be investigated at Stage 2, or referred to be heard by a panel of the Governing Body at Stage 3.

Although complaints at this stage are considered seriously, it is important to remember that the complainants may be unaccustomed to dealing with formal situations, and it is advisable to keep the complaints process as informal as possible.

The following guidance will ensure transparency and consistency at this stage:

- The complainant should write to the Chair of the Governing Body within **20 school days** of receipt of the Headteacher's response to Stage 1. Where possible previous letters, associated papers etc should be included.
- Assistance should be provided to those who have difficulty in recording their complaint in writing. If unable to provide a written complaint, the complainant may complain to the Chair of Governors over the telephone or in person. The details will be recorded by the Chair and a copy of the written record sent to the complainant for approval and information. This will ensure the same level of understanding and expectation from both parties.
- The Chair will make a judgement as to whether to reinvestigate at this stage or to progress the complaint to the next stage and convene a Governing Body Complaints Panel. In such circumstances, the Chair may seek advice from the local authority.
- The Chair will aim to acknowledge the complaint in writing within **three school days** of receipt. The acknowledgement will recap the complaint and provide the target date by which the final response will be provided to the complainant. The Chair will respond to this stage of the investigation within **20 school days**.
- In the event of a reinvestigation, the Chair in his/her response will state what the findings are and whether any complaints are upheld or not upheld. Details of any actions the school will take to attempt to resolve the complaint will be provided, together with reasons for the actions. The response will explain that if the complainant remains unhappy s/he should write to the Clerk to the Governing Body within **20 school days** of receipt of the response letter from the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The Chair will copy the response to the Headteacher and any other member of staff who is concerned in the complaint.

Where a complaint against the Headteacher, or against a governor (other than the Chair), is referred to the Chair of the Governing Body more than three months after the act/omission complained about, it will not normally be dealt with at Stage 2. However, where the Chair of the Governing Body is satisfied there was good reason for the delay in its being referred to him/her, it will be dealt with at Stage 2.

Stage 3 - Governors Complaints Panel

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome at Stage 2 and wishes to take the matter further, s/he can escalate the complaint to Stage 3 – a meeting with members of the governing body's complaints panel. This is the final stage of the complaints procedure.

A request to escalate to Stage 3 must be made to the Clerk, via the school office, within **20 school days** school days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The Clerk will record the date the complaint is received and acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing (either by letter or email) within **three school days** school days.

Note: Complaints about staff conduct will not generally be handled under this Complaints Procedure. Complainants will be advised that any staff conduct complaints will be considered under staff disciplinary procedures, if appropriate, but outcomes will not be shared with them.

Arranging the Complaints Panel Meeting

The Clerk will write to the complainant with three options for meeting dates. The Clerk will aim to convene a meeting within **15 school days** of receipt of the Stage 3 request. If this is not possible, the Clerk will provide an anticipated date and keep the complainant informed.

If the complainant rejects the offer of three proposed meeting dates, without good reason, the Clerk will decide when to hold the meeting. The meeting will then proceed in the complainant's absence on the basis of written submissions from both parties.

Who are the Complaints Panel?

The complaints panel will be formed of three, available impartial, governors with no prior involvement or knowledge of the complaint. Prior to the meeting, they will decide amongst themselves who will act as the Chair of the Complaints Panel. If there are fewer than three governors from Coleridge Primary School available, the Clerk will source any additional, independent governors through another local school or through the LA's Governor Services team, in order to make up the panel.

Prior to the Panel Meeting

As soon as possible after a date has been set, the Clerk, Chair of the panel or PA to the Headteacher will write to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors and the complainant to request that the following be provided at **least seven school term days** in advance of the meeting:

- all previous paperwork concerning the issues raised in the complaint,
- any further documents they intend to rely on at the meeting, and
- the names of the witnesses (if any) they will be calling.

Witnesses - The Headteacher, any teacher involved and the complainant may all invite any other individual who is directly involved in the complaint to attend the meeting as a witness. However, the involvement of additional persons is at the discretion of the Chair of the Complaints Panel. Accordingly, the Chair of the Complaints Panel may decide the Panel will not hear from witnesses who in his/her view has no evidence to give which is relevant to the issues the Panel has to decide.

Support at the meeting - The Chair of the Complaints Panel will inform the complainant of her/his right to bring someone along to provide support. This can be a relative or friend. The Headteacher and any teacher involved will also be informed of their right to be accompanied by a friend/supporter or representative for example a member of their professional association or union.

Legal representation - Generally, we do not encourage either party to bring legal representatives to the panel meeting. However, there may be occasions when legal representation is appropriate. For instance, if a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, s/he may wish to be supported by union and/or legal representation. Note: representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

Date, time and venue The Clerk will confirm the date, time and venue of the meeting **at least five school term days** in advance of the meeting, ensuring that the venue and proceedings are accessible.

Circulation of papers - All papers and the names of the witnesses (if any) to be called should be circulated by the Clerk to the Governing Body **at least five school term days** in advance of the meeting. In certain situations, it will be unfeasible to circulate papers by email and a hard-copy pack will be available to collect from the school office. The panel will not normally accept, as evidence, recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without the informed consent of all parties being recorded.

Translation and Interpreting – The complainant should inform the Chair of the Complaints Panel of any translation and interpreting needs. The Panel Chair will ensure these are met as requested.

Child complainant - A parent/carer who is not a complainant may attend the meeting as if s/he were a party, where the complaint concerns that parent/carer's child.

Note. The panel will not review any new complaints at this stage or consider evidence unrelated to the initial complaint. New complaints must be dealt with from Stage 1 of the procedure.

The Panel Meeting

- Immediately prior to the start of the meeting the Panel will hold a pre-meeting on its own with the Clerk and its adviser (if any).
- The hearing of the complaint at this stage is to hear the complaint afresh not rather than a consideration as to whether earlier stages have been handled correctly.
- The aim of the meeting is to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant. The complainant will be asked what outcome s/he is seeking.
- At the start of the meeting the Complaints Panel will identify in discussion with the parties the issues it is to decide. Once these issues are identified the Complaints Panel will not consider or decide any other issues.
- The remit of the panel will be explained to the parties by the Chair of the Complaints Panel.
- Each party will be given the opportunity of putting her/his case forward and asking questions
- All issues identified by the Complaints Panel will be addressed.

- The meeting will be properly minuted by the Clerk to the Governing Body and key findings of fact will be noted.
- The Chair of the Complaints Panel has the power to regulate the meeting, provided any decisions s/he makes are not inconsistent with this Procedure.
- The Chair of the Complaints Panel has the power to require additional documentary evidence and/or witnesses to be provided/ called, if not provided/called by a party.
- The hearing is to be conducted in an informal manner with everyone treated with respect and courtesy.
- The meeting will be held in private.
- Where there are communication difficulties the school may wish to use recording devices to ensure that the complainant is able to access and review discussions at a later point. All parties should agree in advance to being recorded. Schools can use their discretion to decide whether to allow complainants to record meetings but informed consent must be obtained. Schools can refuse to accept as evidence recordings of conversations that were obtained covertly and without informed consent of all parties being recorded.
- If a party wishes at the meeting to introduce previously undisclosed documentary evidence or witnesses, the meeting will be adjourned to allow the other parties time to consider and respond to the new evidence. The Chair of the Complaints Panel has the power to refuse to admit such evidence.

Outcome

The panel will consider the complaint and all the evidence presented. The panel can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or in part
- dismiss the complaint in whole or in part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:

- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint
- where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

The response from the Panel will be provided to the complainant and Coleridge Primary School with a full explanation of the decision and the reason(s) for it, within **10 school term days**. The entire process at this stage should be conducted within **25 school term days**.

The school recognises that a complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the hearing does not find in the complainant's favour. Complainants should be assured that all complaints are taken seriously by the school but that sometimes it may only be possible to establish facts, suggest recommendations and decide on actions (if any) the school will take.

There is no further right of appeal within either the school or the local authority.

The letter to the complainant will include details of how to contact the Department for Education if the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been handled by Coleridge Primary School.

The DfE will not normally reinvestigate the substance of the complaint but only whether the School followed the correct complaints procedure.

If the complaint is:

- jointly about the Chair and Vice Chair or
- the entire governing body or
- the majority of the governing body

Stage 3 will be heard by a panel of independent, co-opted governors.

The response will detail any actions taken to investigate the complaint and provide a full explanation of the decision made and the reason(s) for it. Where appropriate, it will include details of actions Coleridge Primary School will take to resolve the complaint. The response will also advise the complainant of how to escalate the complaint should the complainant remain dissatisfied.

Next Steps

If the complainant believes the School did not handle the complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or the School acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of its duties under education law, the complainant may contact the Department for Education after they have completed Stage 3.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by a school. The DfE will consider only whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.

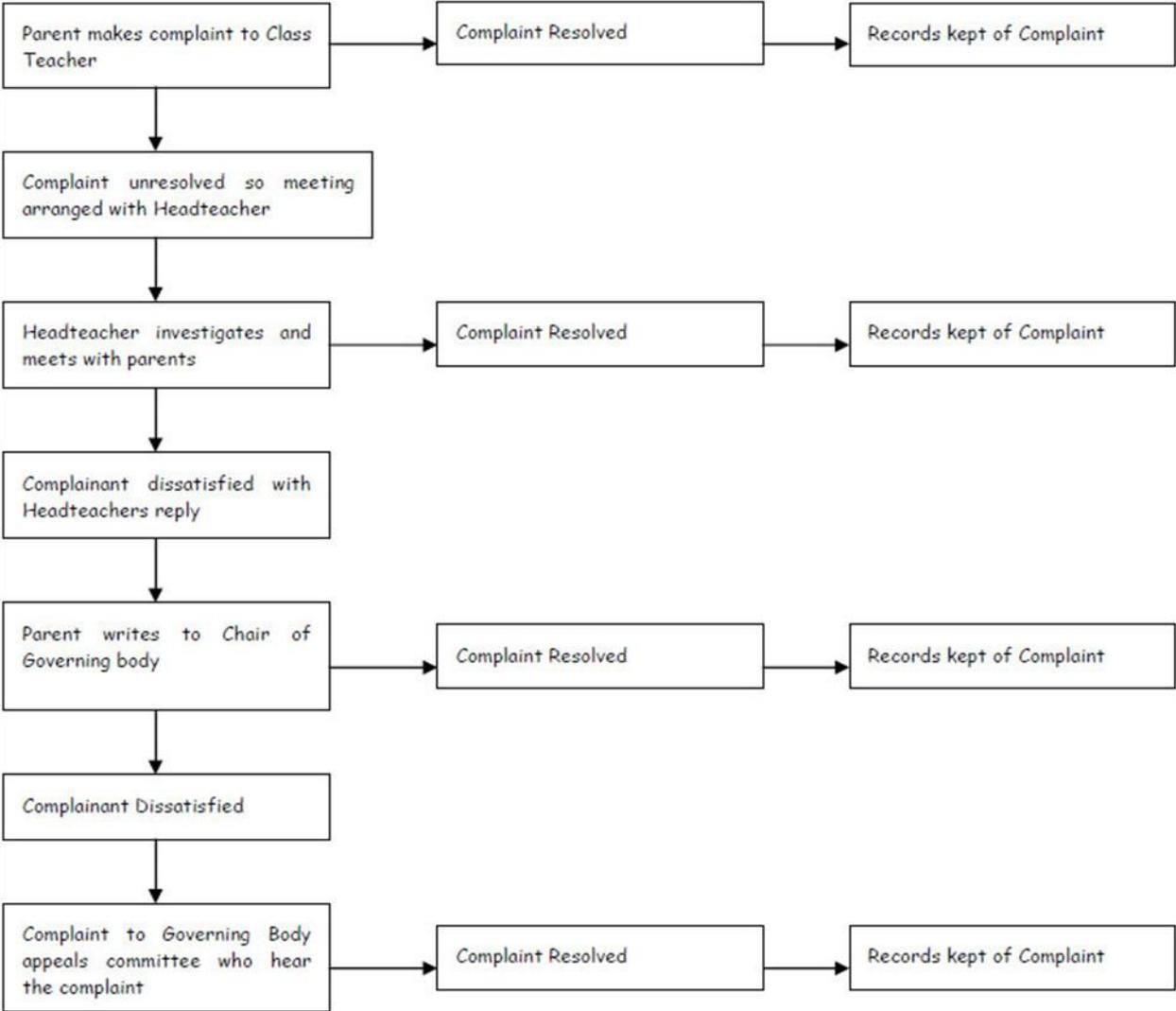
The complainant can refer the complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Date of Policy: March 2021

Review Date: March 2023

Appendix A: Complaints Flowchart



Appendix B: Complaints Form

Please complete and return to Leon Choueke (Headteacher) head@coleridgeprimary.net or place in an envelope marked Private and Confidential and return via the school office, who will acknowledge receipt.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date:

Appendix C: Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

Unreasonable behaviour is defined as behaviour that hinders the school's consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate the complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways that are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information that they expect to be taken into account and commented upon
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to the complainant's own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into the complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email or by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

While the complaint is being progressed, complainants should try to limit their communication with the school to that relating to the complaint. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an '*unreasonable*' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that the behaviour is unreasonable and ask the complainant to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from [the school](#).

Appendix D: Procedure for handling Complaint campaigns

Should the school become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints:

- all based on the same subject
- from complainants unconnected with the school

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the school will:

- send a single response to all complainants and/or
- publish a single response on the school's website

If complainants continue to be dissatisfied with the school's response, they may contact the DfE.

Appendix E: Roles and Responsibilities

Complainant

Complainants will receive a more effective response to a complaint if they:

- explain the complaint in full as early as possible
- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint
- ask for assistance as needed
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect
- refrain from publicising the details of their complaint on social media and respect confidentiality.

Investigator

The investigator's role is to establish the facts relevant to the complaint by:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:
 - sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved
 - interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint
 - consideration of records and other relevant information
 - analysing information
- liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right.

The investigator should:

- conduct interviews with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning
- keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting
- ensure that any papers produced during the investigation are kept securely pending any appeal
- be mindful of the timescales to respond
- prepare a comprehensive report for the headteacher or complaints panel that sets out the facts, identifies solutions and recommends courses of action to resolve problems.

The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Complaints panel (as appropriate, depending on the Stage) will then determine whether to uphold or dismiss the complaint and communicate that decision to the complainant, providing the appropriate escalation details.

Clerk to the Governing Body

The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant and the panel and should:

- set the date, time and venue of the meeting, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible
- collate any written material relevant to the complaint (for example; stage 1 and stage 2 paperwork, school and complainant submissions) and send it to the parties in advance of the meeting within an agreed timescale. *[This can undertaken by Panel Chair or PA to Headteacher]*
- record the proceedings
- circulate the minutes of the meeting
- notify all parties of the panel's decision.

Complaints Panel Chair

The panel's chair, who is nominated in advance of the complaint meeting, should ensure that:

- both parties are asked (via the Clerk) to provide any additional information relating to the complaint by a specified date in advance of the meeting
- the meeting is conducted in an informal manner, is not adversarial, and that, if all parties are invited to attend, everyone is treated with respect and courtesy
- complainants who may not be used to speaking at such a meeting are put at ease. This is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance, provided it does not breach confidentiality or any individual's rights to privacy under the DPA 2018 or GDPR.

If a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the meeting

- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to make their case and seek clarity, either through written submissions ahead of the meeting or verbally in the meeting itself
- the issues are addressed
- key findings of fact are made
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently
- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure
- the meeting is minuted
- they liaise with the Clerk

Panel Member

Panel members should be aware that:

- the meeting must be independent and impartial, and should be seen to be so
No governor may sit on the panel if s/he has had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it.
- the aim of the meeting should be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant

We recognise that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the meeting does not find in the complainant's favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations.

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting
Parents/carers often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child.
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the meeting

Careful consideration of the atmosphere and proceedings should ensure that the child/young person does not feel intimidated.

The panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults.

If the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help the child/young person present the complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the meeting, if any, the child/young person needs to attend.

However, the parent should be advised that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting that the panel considers is not in the child/young person's best interests.

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

Appendix F: Useful Contact Details

Governor Services

Haringey Education Partnership
Inderwick Rd,
Crouch End
N8 9JF
Tel: 0203 9675100

Translating and Interpreting Service

thebigword
Tel: 0800 757 3100
Email: info@thebigworld.com
<https://en-gb.thebigword.com/>

Haringey First Response Service

The Children and Young People's Service
River Park House
225 High Road
London N22 8HQ
Tel: 0208 489 4592/5652/5762/4582

Office Hours

(Monday to Thursday 8.45 am to 5pm; Friday 8.45 am to 4.45pm)

Tel: 0208 489 6081/6082

Equalities and Diversity

River Park House
225 High Road
London N22 8HQ
Tel: 0208 489 2518

The Advisory Centre for Education

72 Durnsford Road
London
Tel: 0208888 3377

Education Welfare Service

The Children and Young People's Service
4th Floor, Alexandra House
10 Station Road
London N22 7TR
Tel: 0208 489 3866
Email: education.welfareservices@haringey.gov.uk

The Department for Education (DFE)

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Tel: 01325391102

Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)

National Business Unit – OFSTED
Royal Exchange Building Street
Anne's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
Tel: 08456 40 40 45

Local Safeguarding Children's Body

The Children and Young People's Service
River Park House
225 High Road
London N22 8HQ
Tel: 0208 489 1472

Haringey's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Shauna McAllister
02084892968
Lado@haringey.gov.uk

Appendix G: Complaints covered by other statutory procedures

Certain concerns or complaints cannot be addressed under the schools' complaints procedures. In such cases you should contact the appropriate local office listed below.

Complaints about:

Children's Social Care

School Admissions Appeals and Transfers

Statements of Special Educational Needs/ Education Health and Care Plans

Contact Details:

Feedback and Information Governance Team

River Park House

225 High Road

Wood Green

London N22 8HQ

Tel: 0208 489 2547

Email: FIG@haringey.gov.uk

Permanent Exclusions

Schools Exclusions Coordinator

River Park House

225 High Road

London

N22 8HQ

Tel: 0208 489 5086

Child Protection

In cases of concern about the welfare of any child please contact the Child Protection Team who will advise you on the next steps. Haringey's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is Sarah Roberts sarah.roberts@haringey.gov.uk

Whistle blowing

Schools have an internal Whistle blowing procedure. Other concerns can be raised with Ofsted on 0300 123 3155 email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk